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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the national trend for expansion of Extension programs emphasizing national issues receiving priority attention. It emphasizes a need for program balance and realism, and the obligation to provide educational assistance to all segments of society. Representation on committees to help determine programs is considered a must for volunteer motivation. Fuller utilization of total university resources through the Cooperative Extension Service is reported to be a significant development. It is emphasized that decisions to organize, to staff and meet pressing needs within a State are best decided within that State rather than at the national level. Continuing emphasis on agricultural needs, environmental quality improvement, and people problems is pointed out. (NF)

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"THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTENSION PROGRAMS"*

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I am pleased with this opportunity to participate in your Spring Symposium on "Human Rights--The Contemporary Scene." I have been asked to discuss "The Right to Participate in Extension Programs." I have chosen to encompass within this topic the need for expanded participation and our Extension professional responsibility to assure people of equal opportunity to participate in our program efforts.

These <u>are</u> exciting times for us as Extension workers. Because of our ability to adjust programs according to changing needs and conditions, and our ability to relate effectively to local, State, and national goals, we are being called on to meet expanding opportunities and exciting challenges <u>now</u> and in the years ahead.

We can expect continuing change in our programs, our methods, our clientele, and our organization and procedures because the needs of people change. You, within your State and at the local level, will determine

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how successful Extension is in meeting our expanded opportunities. You are working directly with the people and communities who have the problems.

There is a significant trend nationally for our Extension programs to be expanded in scope with new audiences and in shifting of program emphasis. While great strides were made through the technological revolution of the 1950's and 1960's, the programs of the 1970's will focus more heavily on "people problems." Increasing concern is being given to helping people know better how to live as well as how to make a living.

Pause for a moment and think of the widespread national issues receiving priority attention -- environmental quality, soil, water, air pollution; the effective use and management of pesticides and chemicals; the disadvantaged, low-income people; the alienated and minority groups who are "outside" the mainstream of society; the need for population dispersion and the further development of rural America; malnutrition and health of our population; housing and transportation problems -- all of these and others need our attention and need Extension educational assistance. Yes, all this while maintaining our primary responsibility of helping to assure a strong, viable, agricultural industry which will benefit both the producer and the consumer.

More specifically, because of our expanding responsibilities with a highly diversified potential audience and with an always limited professional staff, we must be concerned with program balance -- using our scarce resources to most effectively help those who most need our help as well as to have the greatest impact on solutions to critical problems of our society.

As we consider the elements of program balance in order to assure "The Right to Participate," let's keep in mind the broad framework which defines the arena in which we work. The Smith-Lever Act and the accompanying regulations and policies set the boundaries. Appropriations made by Congress have a direct influence on program balance. Other Federal laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and policies and regulations of the U. S. Department of Agriculture help to determine program balance. State appropriations and laws and University policies have a direct influence on program balance within a given State. I mention these only to remind us that we need to be realistic in our deliberations. It is within this broad framework of metes and bounds that we have a high degree of flexibility. Perhaps

most important of all, is our giving close consideration to what the people themselves need and want. Within our broad charter we are able to respond closely to local, State, and national needs as expressed in many ways by the people who have problems and want or need our assistance.

As a public supported agency and institution, it seems to me that we have an obligation to provide educational assistance to all segments of society, regardless of income levels and educational levels and to all segments of society, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin. We must take into account that which will contribute most to the solution of critical problems for the benefit of our total society as well as being of most help to individuals and to special interest groups within our society.

Program balance may be defined as "a need to work and with/assist all segments of society in those areas for which we have or can acquire competence, should provide assistance, and have the legal and moral obligation to help.

"Are our programs in balance? Do we serve only those who demand our services? Should we serve only those who

have the greatest degree of need? Or as a publicly supported educational agency or institution do we have a responsibility to insure a balance in our program efforts?"

If we are to assure "the right of people from all segments of the population to participate", we need to be concerned about the extent to which people at all levels are involved in planning and conducting Extension programs. If volunteers are to be motivated to assist in conducting programs, if minority groups, low-income, and other groups now outside the mainstream of society are to participate in Extension programs, they must be represented on committees that help us to determine programs.

If suburban and urban families are to be included in our Extension audiences, they too must be represented. If the total agricultural interests, including the suppliers, processors and distributors of agricultural products are to benefit from Extension assistance, they must be involved. In fact, representatives of all of these groups must be involved with the professional staff in determining program priorities and in designing

programs appropriate for specific target groups. For example, programs designed specifically by and for the commercial producer will not serve as a motivating factor for the small, low-income producer. Neither will programs designed for and by the more affluent, middle-income family encourage participation of volunteer leaders and homemakers from the disadvantaged, hard-to-reach families.

In other words, if specific segments of our society are to participate in Extension programs and are to provide volunteer leadership for conducting the programs, representatives from these specific segments must be involved in determining program needs and in designing programs which will best meet these needs.

There are many significant trends developing across the country to more effectively use both volunteers and professional resources in meeting the needs of a broadened audience. One I have just mentioned is greatly expanding the representation of broader segments of society on Extension planning committees. This includes both special interest committees and overall Extension advisory committees who help us determine programs and

program balance. Another is the greatly expanded use of volunteers to assist in teaching and guidance at the local level, particularly in home economics and 4-H youth programs.

Another trend is a greatly expanded use of program assistants selected from the group that they are to assist. The expanded food and nutrition educational program is an excellent example but we are also seeing considerable expansion in the use of 4-H youth assistants, program assistants to work specifically with the low-income, small farmer, and, to a more limited extent, program assistants to work with community resource development programs in the more isolated, low-income communities.

Another development concurrent with the expanded use of program aides is the specialty assignments of county and area Extension agents and specialists. Particular emphasis and assistance to commercial agriculture is being assigned more and more to specialized agents on a broader geographic basis. Such an assignment permits the local county staff to work more closely with more comprehensive programs such as community resource development and with the low-income, small producers, the

deprived, alienated families and minority groups who also want and need our assistance.

A significant development and trend taking place is the fuller utilization of total university resources through the Cooperative Extension Service. As we meet the changing needs of an expanding audience, we are finding that these people are asking for assistance with solutions to problems that go beyond the usual resources available in schools and colleges of agriculture. This is particularly true in community resource development, family living, and 4-H youth development programs. Regardless of where Extension is administratively located within a university, new ways are being provided to make the total resources of the universities more relevant and available to meet the current needs of the people of the State. Developing community colleges may be an excellent additional source of expertise to help meet expanding needs.

You at the University of Wisconsin have demonstrated this trend and have served as an example for other universities.

With always limited financial and professional resources, it is mandatory that we gear our Extension efforts to those who need and can benefit most from our services.

The process of program development, decision-making, and setting priorities is our most difficult task. Always with limited resources, we must make hard decisions on how to best utilize these resources. As individuals, as units, as total Extension, we must strive to put our efforts on the most important problems. Hopefully, we can achieve the "essential," the "desirable" and the "nice." Most often, we find ourselves concentrating on the "essential."

I want to emphasize that decisions about how best to organize, how best to staff, and procedures about how best to meet the pressing needs within a State can best be decided within that State and not at the national level. Our role at the national level is to assist the State in meeting the most pressing needs which you as a professional staff with assistance from your people decide are most important to you.

We can share with you developments on a national and regional basis which may have a direct impact on your efforts at State and local levels.

Let me touch on the major emphasis for Extension as I see it in the immediate years ahead.

We expect to maintain the strength of Extension through a high degree of involvement of people in determining programs. As needs of people change, we can expect changes in Extension program emphasis and priorities.

We can expect a continuing emphasis on agricultural needs with increasing priority given to economics, management, and marketing systems as these affect the large commercial producer as well as the smaller, limited resource producer. We can expect increasing emphasis on environmental quality improvement, particularly in solid waste disposal from agricultural products and in the safe use of chemicals and pesticides.

We are putting more emphasis on programs relating to "people problems," particularly in family living, youth development, and community development in non-metropolitan areas. Increasing educational assistance

is being given to the low-income, alienated, deprived and minority groups who are not now in "the mainstream of society."

Finally, let me challenge you with accepting the following Alternatives for Action:

1. Accept the opportunity to carry out the requirements of the Civil Rights Act which assures equal opportunity for participation in our programs regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin.

2. Increase emphasis on problems, needs, and concerns of the disadvantaged, alienated, and dislocated potential participants.

3. Identify and eliminate fallacies, roadblocks, social inhibitors, and economic barriers which limit effective program participation.

4. Review priorities and allocate time and resources to reach people who are not now being served or to whom we are now providing limited educational assistance.

I will be happy to elaborate on these or other important considerations if you have questions.

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